

## WORKERS DISPLACEMENT : SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND COPING

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*The paper examines the case of industrial sickness in New Rajpur Mills, which resulted in industry unemployment and an adverse impact on the lives of workers. It reveals the initial response of the workers to be closure, the financial hardships and other physical and mental problems faced by them, and coping strategies adopted. The paper finds that more than two thirds of workers had yet not recovered from their economic, social and job related problems.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The economic reforms initiated in the early 1990's were intended to replace the centrally controlled economic regime with a competitive environment where market forces were supposed to ensure efficient allocation and use of resources in order to enable Indian industry to become globally competitive and export-oriented. The reform process introduced measures, which progressively dismantled state control and regulatory mechanisms, cleared blocks in the way of foreign capital inflows, opened up areas for private investment in pockets hitherto reserved for the public sector, reduced custom duties, tax reforms, moved towards full convertibility of the currency and capital market reforms. However, the available evidence on employment indicate that underemployment has grown in the post-1991 period. In central public sector undertakings (CPSUs), employment actually declined in absolute terms indicating job losses. In fact, the growth in employment in the post-1991 period is accounted for by the growth of casual and self employment—the types of employment which conceal underemployment. Unemployment due to restructuring has arisen from three sources—closure of some of the economically non-viable enterprises, downsizing of the workforce in other weak units and adjustments in labour force in perfectly healthy enterprises necessitated by changes in market conditions and/or technological innovations (ILO, 1996). Here in this paper, New Rajpur Mills (NRM) is a case of industrial sickness resulting in involuntary unemployment and an adverse impact on the lives of some 1250 employed workers.

On March 1, 1994 the court admitted the petition of one of the creditor of the NRM, Mr. Idulji Jawrewala, seeking winding up of the above mill. It was pleaded that the company was unable to pay debts as the quantum of mill's liabilities far exceeded the value of its assets and sought the court's help in getting their debt from the company. In pursuance of this, the official liquidator took over the possession of the assets and properties of the mill on March 2, 1994 as its provisional liquidator. Thus, NRM pulled down its shutters on March 2, 1994. Meanwhile, the Textile Labour Association (TLA) representing the Mill workers, filed a case in the High Court challenging its verdict. The High Court revised its order on the liquidation of the mill and redirected (Order dated: 9.3.94) the provisional

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liquidator to hand back the possession of the assets immediately to the management of the company. Aggrieved with the revised decision of the High Court, the petitioning creditor filed a special leave petition before the Supreme Court which, through its order (dated 9.5.94) quashed the order passed by the Division Bench of the High Court and directed the provisional liquidator to take back possession of the assets of the company. Accordingly, the NRM Co. Ltd. was ordered to be wound up and the provisional liquidator took over the assets of the company. The reasons for the closure, as stated by the management, were the scarcity of finance, obligation to produce controlled cloth, lack of demand for cloth resulting in huge stocks, financial problems, fluctuating prices of cotton, increase in salaries and expenses, and the competition from power looms and process houses. Interestingly, several workers considered the family feud and income tax raids as the reasons for financial problems of the mill. However, the owners of the mill staunchly denied this.

## II. METHODOLOGY

While conducting the present study, a sample size of around 11 per cent workers was decided upon, which meant a sample of 135 workers among the 1250 employees at the time of closure of the mill. A list of workers was drawn from the forms filled in for the payment of the provident fund. Every ninth and 10th workers were chosen, so that if the ninth worker could not be interviewed for some reason, the 10th worker would be contacted. In all, 76 workers could not be contacted due to their non-availability on the given address, their migration to the native place, wrong address and far-off place of residence. The *pratinidhis* (representative) of the union helped in identifying the addresses of sample-respondents. Only in a few cases, the respondents did not keep appointments and the researcher had to try again and again to contact them.

The main tool of data collection was the pre-coded interview schedule. Each interviewee was met separately mostly in their home. As far as possible, the interview was conducted inside the house for about an hour, so as to avoid any disturbance. Later on, a discussion was held with the leaders of the Textile Labour Association (TLA) representing the NRM where similar issues were raised. Interviews were also held with the factory manager, production manager and the owners of the mill. Apart from this, several other documents were obtained from the libraries of TLA, Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owners Association and Ahmedabad Textile Industry Research.

## III. PROFILE OF WORKERS

As regards the profile of sample respondents, most of them were males with an average age of 43.2 years. A majority of them belonged to the lower castes and originated mainly from Gujarat. Three-fourths of the workers held permanent jobs at NRM while half of the rest aspired to be made permanent within a year. Most of them had lived in Ahmedabad for more than 20 years and had some form of formal education. Their average household size was 5.25 with three-fourths of the families having school-going children. The financial condition of the workers on the eve of closure was not good as a majority of them had no savings. Whatever existed as savings was in the form of provident fund or gratuity. Two-thirds of them were in debt at the time of the closure. The only relief was that most of them lived in *pucca* houses and paid nominal rents. As regards the re-employment record of the NRM workers, there were those 28.3 per cent lucky workers who succeeded in getting

jobs almost immediately. In contrast, a few unfortunate ones (14.1 per cent) were not able to get jobs even after 10 months of unemployment. One-tenth of the workers indicated neither loss nor gain from the new job. An equal number of them reported a gain in the income. The average income of those re-employed dropped from Rs. 1994 (from the NRM job) to Rs. 1129 a month with an average loss of Rs. 865 per month or 43 per cent (Noronha and Sharma, 1999). It was, therefore, natural that over 60 per cent of the respondents reported their poor financial condition. Workers who have been displaced faced substantial underemployment by way of skills. Most of the workers had no knowledge of the closure but financial difficulties faced by the mill and the usual cases of mills not reopening after their closure may have pushed them to search for jobs. Those with lower age, better education and professional training had better job prospects than those not having such characteristics (See for details Noronha, 1999a and 1999b). However, the focus of this paper is to examine the way in which the support systems (family members, friends/relatives, trade unions and government) responded to worker's needs.

#### IV. INITIAL RESPONSE TO CLOSURE OF NRM

NRM workers expressed different feelings to the news of shut-down of the plant. Nearly half of them were shocked. This was because they had no indication that the mill was going to close down especially when wages were paid on time and sufficient raw materials existed in the mill. There were those 17 per cent workers who were depressed. A few workers considered it a temporary phase and therefore took it casually. An equal number of them took the closure as a reality (Table 1). Loss of hope, lack of preparedness and feeling of insecurity were the other expressions of workers to the plant shut-down.

Table 1  
Initial Response to Closure

<i>Initial response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Considered permanent	11	8.1
Considered temporary	10	7.4
Shocked	65	48.1
Unprepared	4	3.0
Depressed	24	17.8
Insecure	11	8.1
Difficult	6	4.4
Happy or indifferent	4	3.0
Total	135	100.0

Source: Field Survey

#### V. FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

Given the above facts, one can very well imagine the plight of the NRM workers. Except a few of them (18 per cent), almost all the NRM workers were unprepared or totally vulnerable. A few who were somewhat prepared or well prepared were less than one-fifth of the sample (Table 2). Such a financial vulnerability could be explained in two ways. One, the usual low wages, large family size and absence of other sources. Second, their overconfidence with the NRM job as previous signs of malfunctioning of the mill were always denied by the management.

Table 2  
Financial Preparedness of the NRM Workers

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Well prepared	12	8.9
Somewhat prepared	12	8.9
Unprepared	100	74.1
Totally vulnerable	11	8.1
Total	135	100.0

*Source:* Field Survey.

### 1. Terminal Benefits

Given their vulnerability it was relevant to know whether the NRM workers received their dues towards Provident Fund (P.F.)/gratuity, etc. The P.F. was received at least after one year of the closure. At NRM, two-fifths of the workers received their Provident Fund which amounted to more than Rs. 50,000. This was the case of only those who had put in several years of service. Those who received up to Rs. 9999 through the P.F. dues were less than one-fifth (Table 3). The rest of the workers were more or less equally distributed over the various other categories.

Table 3  
Amount of Provident Fund Received

<i>Amount received</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Up to 9999	24	17.7
10000-19999	12	8.9
20000-29999	13	9.6
30000-39999	16	11.9
40000-49999	13	9.6
50000 and above	58	42.3
Total	135	100.0

*Source:* Field Survey.

### 2. Use of P.F. Money

Sharma (1983, p. 92) states that the displaced workers in the initial phase mainly depended on the borrowings and help from kith and kin. Later when they receive the compensation money, it is used in clearing the loans and the leftover is kept to meet financial expenses in months of uncertainty. Similar was the case for NRM workers. It is observed that about one-third of the respondents spent their P.F. mainly in repaying the debts. Significantly, more than one-fourth of them invested it in some form of security, while an equal number of them spent their P.F. amount on social ceremonies or monthly expenditure. The rest spent it on items like house construction, supplementing self-employment work or illness of family member. Thus the amount was spent in several ways but the spending on clearing the debt and meeting the monthly family expenditure still dominate (Table 4).

Table 4  
Single Important Item on which Provident Fund Spent

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Monthly Expenditure	18	14.1
Investment in securities	39	28.9
Repaying debts	42	31.1
Social ceremonies	21	14.8
House construction	10	7.4
Investment in informal sector	2	1.4
Wife's illness	1	.7
N.A.	3	1.4
Total	135	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

### 3. Monthly Family Expenditure after Closure

In the case of *Apar* workers, Sharma (1983) observed that after the displacement, the workers spent, on an average, 12.30 per cent lesser on their families. Deshpande (1983) observed that during the Bombay textile strike, 86 per cent of the workers had reduced their expenditure on all commodities. Most of the NRM workers (62.2 per cent) also reported reduction in their family expenditure since the closure. The rest (37.8 per cent) did not indicate any reduction in the family expenditure. Of those who did not reduce the expenditure, some felt that their real incomes had reduced and as a result of the inflation, the quality and quantity of the food consumed had deteriorated (Table 5). Those who reported reduction in the expenditure, for more than a half of them, the reduction was to the tune of 25 per cent, while more than one-third reported it as high as 50 per cent (Table 6).

Table 5  
Reduction in Monthly Expenditure

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	84	62.2
No	51	37.8
Total	135	100.0

Source: Field survey.

Table 6  
Self Assessed Decline in Monthly Expenditure

<i>Reduction</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
By 25 per cent	48	57.1
By 50 per cent	31	36.9
More than 50 per cent	5	6.0
Total	84	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

#### 4. Present Financial Condition

The families of respondents reported about their dismal financial condition. There were only a few who recovered from such set-backs but for many of the NRM workers the situation was difficult. This is further supported from the fact that over 60 per cent of the workers perceive their financial condition 'poor' to 'very poor'. Only a few (9.6 per cent) workers stated that their financial condition was good, and another 28 per cent perceived their condition as average (Table 7).

Table 7  
Present Financial Condition

<i>Financial condition</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Good	13	9.6
Average	38	28.1
Poor	35	25.9
Very poor	49	36.3
Total	135	100.0

Source : Field Survey

#### VI. OTHER PROBLEMS FACED BY RESPONDENTS

Three-fourths of the NRM workers stated that quality and quantity of their food intake had deteriorated (Table 8). More than a quarter of the respondents informed that on some occasions they went without food, while another quarter of them sold their ornaments. Some others either withdrew children from school and/or put them to work. Displacement also induced a feeling that one had failed in the role of a father as breadwinner— as a provider of material needs of the household. Thus, many workers of NRM faced serious problems like selling ornaments, going without food, withdrawing children from school, postponing a marriage and putting children to work (Table 8). These experiences of workers also urge the need of proper security against sudden loss of job and their subsequent rehabilitation.

Table 8  
Other Problems Faced by Respondents

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Surrendered rented house	1	0.7
Postponed marriage	32	23.7
Withdrew children from school	32	23.7
Sold property	6	4.4
Sold ornaments	35	25.9
Sold house	3	2.2
Sold household items	7	5.2
Children put to work	31	23.0
Family went to village	13	9.6
Family went without food	37	27.4
Quantity and quality of food deteriorated	101	74.8

Source: Field Survey.

### Physical and Mental Problems

Describing the impact of unemployment on one's personality, Buss et al. (1983) state that job-loss is stressful and is associated with increased depression, anomie, anger/irritation, suspicion and other symptoms of psychological stress. Coronary heart disease among terminated workers is expected. Other physical problems could be: suicide, dyspepia, joint swelling, hypertension, and alopecia.

The NRM workers also stated that they were afflicted with some mental and physical problems. Of all those interviewed, more than a half of the respondents suffered from some mental or physical problems (Table 9).

Table 9  
Mental/Physical Problems Faced By Respondents

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	73	54.0
No	62	45.9
Total	135	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

About one-third of them reported that they have become tense since the closure. Around a quarter (23.3 per cent) stated that they suffered from occasional fever. Others reported suffering from T.B. (12.3 per cent), blood pressure (9.6 per cent) or general weakness (8.2 per cent) (Table 10).

Table 10  
Types of Physical or Mental Problems

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Blood pressure	7	9.6
Heart problem	4	5.4
T.B.	9	12.3
Nervousness	3	4.1
Weakness	6	8.2
Fever	17	23.3
Tension	22	30.1
Stomach ache	3	4.1
Asthma	2	2.7
Total	73	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

### VII. IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

Even today (in spite of the growing number of redundant workers), in the eyes of the public, the unemployed individual is seen with suspicion rather than with sympathy. Even though the unemployment status may not be his own creation, the stigma remains. It is, therefore, not surprising that the unemployed people are ostracised by others, or they withdraw themselves from social activities. The withdrawal may be due to the shame or financial difficulty in reciprocating to other's obligations. Unemployment results in a loss of an active occupational role, many job-related friendship, and loss



of status. Losing one's regular job removes one from a previously stable system of relationships. Job-loss changes both the pattern and quality of a person's interactions with others. Contacts with some friends may be lost, while some old relationships take on new importance as sources of aid and comfort. Prolonged unemployment weakens family and other personal relations. Sometimes, an unemployed man tends to withdraw himself from personal relationship and becomes irritable. His authority that rested on his role as a provider is reduced to a level of contempt. He often loses his self-confidence even when his wife and older children are supportive. With regards to NRM workers more than one-third of the respondents felt that family relations did get affected due to their job-loss. that so (Table 11).

Table 11  
Family Relationships Adversely Affected

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	48	35.6
No	87	64.4
Total	135	100.0

Source: Field Survey.

Such situations of strained relationships found manifestations even during the interviews. Wives of some respondents tended to contradict whatever the husband said and vice-versa. Several expressions of respondents or their relatives during the interviews, like losing warmthness in relations, fear of daughters marriage, frustration, hatredness absent oneself etc, reflect such strained relationships.

### VIII. SOURCES OF SUPPORT

In the case of Apar workers Sharma (1983) observed that the main source of support to the displaced workers was relatives or the borrowings. Likewise, Wersch (1989) reported that the workers' main source of loans during the Bombay textile strike was from relatives and friends; the workers also sustained themselves through moneylenders, banks and credit society. In the present case, the NRM workers depended on several sources for financial help during the difficult period. More than a quarter of them depended only on the borrowings. An equal number of them were helped by the earnings of other member(s) of the family. Some of them depended both on the borrowings and the earnings of other member(s) in the family. Some got help from friends and relatives. A few others depended only on their savings through terminal benefits (Table 12).

#### Role of Relatives

Unlike the western countries where there are social security provisions for displaced workers, in India, also many workers have to fall back on their relatives for social and financial support. Even in the case of the Bombay textile strike, Deshpande (1983) observed that 85.37 per cent of the workers depended on relatives or friends.

With regards to NRM workers, there seemed no such distinct role of relatives but the fact remains that about a half of the respondents (52.6 per cent) sought help from their relatives, while the rest of the workers did not receive any such support (Table 13). This is



Table 12  
Other Sources of Help

<i>Source</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Terminal benefits	5	3.7
Savings	9	6.7
Help from friends and relatives	16	11.9
Borrowings	36	26.6
Other members of the family	33	24.4
Job	9	6.7
Borrowings and earnings of other members	13	9.6
Terminal benefits and other member earnings	6	4.4
Relatives and friends and borrowings	4	3.0
N.A.	4	3.0
Total	135	100.0

Sources : Field Survey.

similar to Sharma's (1983) finding that the Apar workers had mixed reaction vis-a-vis the role of their relatives.

Table 13  
From Relatives Help

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	55	40.7
No	71	52.6
Did not ask for help	9	6.7
Total	135	100.0

Sources: Field Survey.

## IX. OVERCOMING PROBLEMS OF DISPLACEMENT

Sharma (1983) observed that in the case of Apar workers, most of them could not come out of the adverse impact of their job displacement. Thus, the job crisis as it began, turned into a financial crisis and finally affected the social life of the workers.

Table 14  
Recovery from Different Problems

<i>Response</i>	<i>Economic Problems</i>	<i>Job Problems</i>	<i>Social Problems</i>
Fully recovered	17 (12.6)	19 (14.1)	28 (20.7)
To a large extent	12 (8.9)	13 (9.6)	14 (10.4)
To some extent	12 (8.9)	5 (3.7)	4 (3.0)
Not at all	94 (69.6)	98 (72.6)	89 (65.9)
Total	135 (100)	135 (100)	135 (100)

Source: Field Survey.

The situation of NRM workers appears to be similar to those of the Apar workers. Most of the respondents could not recover from any of the problems: economic (69.6 per cent), job-related (72.6 per cent) or social problems (65.9 per cent). The rest had partly or fully overcome the crisis (Table 14).

### Family Support in Overcoming Problems

The family is a special case of social support (Buss et al., 1983). The family may help the unemployed by offering helpful information and comfort, material help, decreased consumption or themselves taking jobs and providing an alternative income to the households. According to Kahn (1964), some of the wives came to their husbands' rescue. Some changed part-time to full-time work while others already working put on extra work. The proportion of working wives was higher at the time of interview than at the time of lay-offs.

Similar was the case with NRM workers where job displacement resulted in twice the number of spouses (37 per cent) being employed after the closure in comparison to only a few (18.5 per cent) before the closure (Table 15).

Table 15  
Cases Where Spouse Took Up a Job

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	25	18.5
Working prior to closure	25	18.5
No	72	53.4
N.A.	13	9.6
Total	135	100.0

Sources : Field Survey.

Of those who took up some job, most of them were self-employed (30.0 per cent), followed by those (28.0 per cent) engaged in putting out system where the trader or the retailer provided them with raw material and the workers produced the finished products. A quarter of the spouses got employed as factory workers, and a few others (14 per cent) joined the service sector, mainly as masons and domestic workers. Only one of them was employed as a teacher (Table 16).

Table 16  
Nature of Work of Spouses

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Self-employed	15	30.0
Factory worker	13	26.0
Job in service sector	7	14.0
Putting out worker	14	28.0
Teacher	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Sources : Field Survey.

Table 17  
Earnings of Spouses

<i>Earnings</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Up to Rs. 249	12	24.0
250-499	18	36.0
500-999	14	28.0
1000-1499	5	10.0
2000 an above	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Sources : Field Survey.

Though about one-third of the spouses took up work to help the displaced workers, the earnings from their jobs were very meagre, with 60 per cent of them earning less than Rs. 500. Only a very few (10 per cent) earned Rs. 1000 a month (Table 17). However, the very fact that spouses of these workers came forward to mitigate the problem, is a significant development.

In the case of one-third households, other members of the family, supplemented the family income by his/her own earnings. That some of them were employed even prior to the closure, helped these families a lot (Table 18).

Table 18  
Earning of Other Members Apart From Spouses

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Yes	46	34.1
No	89	65.9
Total	135	100.0

Sources : Field Survey.

There were only a very few families (less than 10 per cent) where younger son or daughter were put to work during the difficult financial situation. It indicates that the elders mostly decided to share the burden of the family rather than pushing the younger one's into jobs (Table 19).

Table 19  
Age of Daughter or Son Taking Up a Job

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
upto 14	9	25.0
15-17	8	22.2
18 and above	19	52.8
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey,

## X. RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNION

As mentioned earlier, as soon as the TLA leaders heard that the liquidator had come to take possession of the mill they rushed to the mill and prevented the liquidator from taking

over the mill immediately. Later, one of the TLA leaders lead a protest procession to the mill owners residence. The TLA also filed a writ petition in the High Court calling on it to review the order. In spite of all these efforts, the mill was ordered to be shut down. Subsequently, the TLA filed a petition in the high court demanding setting up a sales committee in order that workers receive their salary due for the month of February 1994. The TLA also took active interest in helping the workers to get their Provident Fund dues and the interim relief of Rs. 1000/. They also assisted workers to get relief under the Textile Workers Rehabilitation Fund. Under this scheme, workers eligible for rehabilitation get 75 per cent of their normal wage in the first year of the closure of their working unit— 50 per cent in the second year and 25 per cent in the third year. This assistance ceases if the worker finds employment in another registered or licensed undertaking. The assistance is not liable to attachment to any account and is not curtailed if the worker sets himself up in self-employment. Besides this, the TLA leadership was also pursuing the government to fund a regeneration scheme for Ahmedabad. The core of the proposal was to set up, on the land of the 15 closed mills, small-scale industries, creating about 40,000 jobs and a wholesale commercial sector creating an additional 12,000 jobs.

The closure of NRM resulted in the Labour Minister visiting the mill, who assured the workers that the mill would be reopened but nothing came of it. Besides this, every political party tried to woo the workers by making false promises during the Assembly elections. It is also through its institution like the Gandhi Labour Institute that provided retraining for the displaced NRM workers under the NRF scheme.

## XI. OBSERVATIONS

The NRM workers displaced from the job expressed different feelings on the closure. However, a majority of them were shocked as they were not prepared to confront such a setback in their job career. This has also been observed in the western context. Buss et al. (1983) state that considerable anxiety occurs after the plant closes. Permanent layoffs after years of tenure means a traumatic shock to the company workers. Facing a labour market where jobs are scarce was a difficult experience for many. Mere anticipation of redundancy induced stress and anxiety even when the day-to-day reality remained unchanged. Similarly, Wilcock and Franke (1963) also state that anger, resentment, bitterness, frustration and bewilderment describe the emotions of many of the unemployed who became isolated from the work environment and a large part of their usual human association. Some of these problems could be alleviated by issuing a notice prior.

A notice period serves several purposes. It enables the workers to overcome the initial shock, helps the workers in planning for options and finally helps in choice of the alternatives to arrive at a decision, thereby facilitating labour market adjustment. However this does not imply that the advance notice will increase employment and decrease the unemployment rates. In fact, displaced workers compete for a fixed and lesser number of vacant positions. Therefore, the gains to those workers who received notice would come solely at the expense of those who fail to receive such notice (Noronha, 1999b). Nonetheless, advance notification according to Addison and Portugal (1987), lowers the duration of unemployment resulting from a closure. It makes the situation more transparent benefiting society and workers alike by facilitating movement of labour to expanding industries and the productive search for jobs. Moreover, prolonged joblessness adversely affected the

physical and mental health of the workers by stigmatising the status of the displaced worker in the eyes of potential employers (Moore, 1990).

Given that the NRM workers were caught unaware, the only savings available to them was the P.F. amount which they received within a year of the closure, prevented them from turning to destitution. They spent the money on clearing debt or on family expenditure. There were only a few of them who saved a part of it. In order to cope with such adverse conditions, about two-thirds of the respondents resorted to reduction on the family expenditure. Of these, one-third had reduced it by 50 per cent and more than a half of them, by 25 per cent. More than three-fifths of the respondents reported their very poor financial condition and depended on borrowings and support of other earners in the family. The other major problem with most of the respondents was deterioration in the quantity and quality of the food. The worst happened with those few who sold their ornaments, postponed marriages, withdrew children from school, went without food or put children to work. Sharma (1983) also observes that shifting the family to native place, putting younger ones to work or shifting to low-rent houses indicated less serious problems faced by the respondents. For him, the cases of selling utensils, forceful eviction from the rented houses, selling ornaments and withdrawing children from school reflected a serious financial problem. Similar have been the observations of Wersch (1989) and Deshpande (1983) in the case of the Bombay Textile strike. Such untold miseries are not only inflicted on displaced workers in a developing society like India, but also on western workers. Kelvin and Jarret (1985) observed that plant closures also affect children as they witness parent's unemployment. Financial hardship led to incomplete education. For many men, this was distressing vis-a-vis their children. They lost status and authority in their children's eyes. There was a bitterness, due to loss of income—they were not able to supply pocket-money, presents and luxuries. Unemployment induced a feeling that one had failed in the role of a father as a breadwinner or as a provider of material needs of the household.

As can be expected, such a situation resulted in physical and mental problems for more than a half of the respondents at NRM, which were manifested in terms of tension, general weaknesses, fever and other ailments. During such stressful moments, workers' relatives hardly came forward to help them. One-third of the spouses helped the respondents in coping with the situation by taking up jobs like self-employment, factory work or a job in the service sector. Though such earnings were meagre (about Rs. 500 a month), they brought significant relief to the impoverished family. In one-third of the cases respondents also depended on other members of the family—mainly sons and daughters for support. In spite of this, in more than one-third of the cases, the family relationship was adversely affected.

The stoppage of ESIS facilities may also have had an adverse impact on workers' health. Buss et al. (1983) state in this regard that loss of job for most workers means that their ability to pay for health care is greatly reduced. The loss of health care benefits may in itself produce mental and emotional problem for laid-off workers and their families. Emotional and mental problems arising out of stress and depression manifest themselves as psychomatic illnesses (e.g., headaches, backaches, weaknesses and so on) as well as physical illnesses as in the case of NRM workers. It is unfortunate to learn that more than two-thirds of the workers at NRM had not recovered from their economic, social and job-related problems. The response of the government to the closure of NRM was not very forthcoming. Besides this, a fresh look has to be given at the National Renewal Fund which

so far has mainly provided for the voluntary retirement scheme rather than concentrating on rehabilitation of the laid off workers.

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